

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

EXPRESSING SOLIDARITY WITH CUBAN CITIZENS FOR FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS

SPEECH OF

HON. ALBIO SIREs

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 3, 2021

Mr. SIREs. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to be an original cosponsor and co-author of House Resolution 760, which demonstrates the United States' firm commitment to standing with the Cuban people.

On July eleventh, we witnessed an awakening in Cuba. It began in San Antonio de los Baños, just ten miles from Bejucal, the town where I was born, and then spread to over sixty towns and cities throughout Cuba. The Cuban people rose up and spoke with one voice to call for freedom. Cubans risked their lives by demonstrating against this repressive regime.

As members of the United States Congress, we must make clear that we stand with them. Many Cubans have paid a steep price for their courage. More than seven hundred people were detained or forcibly disappeared in the wake of the protests. This regime showed its true colors, firing live ammunition into crowds and using beatings, arbitrary arrests, and torture to try to stop people from protesting. It blocked internet access to prevent Cubans from communicating with each other and with the world. But I believe that the Cuban people can and will prevail.

These protests, while historic, did not emerge from thin air. For more than sixty years, the Cuban people have endured unspeakable suffering. But as the regime has expanded its repression to go after not just dissidents but also artists and academics and bloggers, a new generation of Cubans has shown its creativity and bravery. The San Isidro movement, which came together in response to a decree aimed at censoring artistic expression, has unlocked something very powerful. By bringing together artists, academics, and Cubans from all walks of life, the leaders of the San Isidro movement have shown the power of collective action to strip away the veneer that the regime tries to present to the world. Underneath the propaganda and the myths, we see a fragile and failed dictatorship that can only hold onto power through repression, corruption, and cynicism. The brutal treatment of the Associated Press journalist Ramon Espinosa showed just how desperate this regime is to hide the reality in Cuba from the rest of the world.

That desperation is the reason why the regime is now prohibiting planned protests for November 15th. The regime is threatening those who plan to demonstrate that they will face severe repercussions, even though they are merely asking to express themselves peacefully, as is their fundamental right.

The question before the U.S. Congress is whether we will answer the call of the Cuban

people. Will we acknowledge them and say "we see you, we hear you, and we are with you"? I hope the answer is yes.

As many of my colleagues know, I left Cuba at the age of eleven. Ever since then, I have never given up hope that one day Cuba would become a democracy. I will never stop fighting to help the Cuban people become free.

I thank my good friends, Congresswoman WASSERMAN SCHULTZ and Congressman DIAZ-BALART, for their leadership. And I urge my colleagues to support this bipartisan resolution.

RECOGNIZING DR. KENNETH COOPER ON THE OCCASION OF HIS 90TH BIRTHDAY

HON. VAN TAYLOR

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 5, 2021

Mr. TAYLOR. Madam Speaker, today, I rise to recognize Dr. Kenneth H. Cooper, recognized as the "Father of Aerobics." Born on March 4, 1931 in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, his desire to practice preventative medicine was fostered by his father, who specialized in preventative dentistry. He would go on to receive his Bachelor of Science and Doctor of Medicine Degree from the University of Oklahoma and a Master of Public Health from Harvard University School of Public Health.

Prior to dedicating his life's work to fitness, Dr. Cooper served as a member of the U.S. Army and U.S. Air Force as a flight surgeon and Director of the Aerospace Medical Laboratory in San Antonio. During his 13 years of military service, he developed the Aerobic Point System as well as the 12-minute and 1.5-mile fitness tests used by military organizations, law enforcement agencies, and thousands of public schools and universities today. In partnership with NASA, he was likewise an integral part of creating the conditioning programs used to prepare astronauts for space.

After retiring as a Lieutenant Colonel, Dr. Cooper devoted his time to researching cardiovascular fitness and longevity. In 1970, he founded the Cooper Athletic Center in Dallas, Texas where he merged research with practice, revolutionizing health and fitness. The Cooper Institute has long been recognized as a leader in the fight against childhood obesity, partnering with several organizations to establish fitness programs in schools across the world.

A man of many accolades with years of knowledge, it is of little surprise his training helped lead the 1970 Brazilian Soccer team to victory in the World Cup.

As a pioneer in preventative medicine, Dr. Cooper has received more than 70 awards and honors. He has authored 19 books and is responsible for the addition of the word "Aerobics" in the Oxford English Dictionary.

While Dr. Cooper's professional and academic career has been filled with great

achievements, it is his family that most inspires him. Dr. Cooper and his wife, Millie, were blessed with a daughter, Berkley, and a son, Tyler. Dr. Cooper and his family set an example by actively practicing what they preach and working to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Dr. Cooper himself successfully completed his first marathon in 1962 and has since logged more than 38,000 miles running.

Now as we recognize Dr. Kenneth Cooper, I ask my colleagues in the House of Representatives to join me in honoring his rich life and legacy.

HONORING SAN ANTONIO VETERAN JESSE VIDALES

HON. JOAQUIN CASTRO

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 5, 2021

Mr. CASTRO of Texas. Madam Speaker, I rise today in honor of Mr. Jesse Vidales who hails from my hometown of San Antonio, Texas. Mr. Vidales celebrated his 100th birthday this past August. Born and raised in San Antonio's Westside, Mr. Vidales emulates what it means to be a proud San Antonian. I am truly honored to recognize him this Veterans Day.

Mr. Jesse Vidales was born on August 9, 1921 to Mr. Jose Ramos Vidales and Mrs. Maria Rios. At the time, Westside San Antonio experienced widespread poverty. Through their tireless efforts, the Vidales family rose above, knowing that education was the surest path to success. During the height of World War II, Mr. Vidales enlisted in the U.S. Army Air Corp where he served with Army Intelligence until the end of the war. After, Mr. Vidales married the love of his life, Mrs. Victoria Perez Vidales, and followed in his father's architectural footsteps and became a successful contractor for more than 50 years.

Madam Speaker, please join me in commemorating the life of Mr. Jesse Vidales. I wish Jesse a happy 100th birthday and Happy Veterans Day. He has reached a milestone, and I thank him for his service to our country and community. May God bless and watch over him.

HONORING EDWARD LONGENECKER ON HIS 100TH BIRTHDAY

HON. MICHAEL CLOUD

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 5, 2021

Mr. CLOUD. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Mr. Edward Longenecker and wish him a happy 100th birthday. Mr. Longenecker is a WWII veteran that has a steadfast love and devotion to God, his family, and country. He is from my hometown of Victoria, Texas. I

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